

Appl. No. 10/769,200

Response to Office Action mailed October 12, 2004

Atty Dkt. No. 113642-049

REMARKS

The non-final Office Action was issued on pending claims 1-25. Claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 14-19, 21, 22, 24 and 25 stand rejected, and claims 3-5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 20 and 23 stand objected to. In this Response, claims 1, 14 and 22 have been amended, no claims have been cancelled and claim 26 has been added. Thus, claims 1-26 are pending in the application.

Applicant invites the Examiner to call Applicant's Representative to discuss any issues with this application.

Allowable Claims

At page 3 of the Office Action, claims 3-5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 20 and 23 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but noted as being allowable if rewritten in independent form for including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the notice of allowable claims.

New claim 26 has been added. Claim 26 corresponds to claim 23, but does not include all of the limitations of claim 23 rewritten in independent form. Claim 26 does include the features of a first workpiece guide movably mounted at the first end of the roller support between an active position and an inactive position; and a second workpiece guide movably mounted at the second end of the roller support between an active position and an inactive position. Claim 26 further includes the feature of claim 23 in which the first and second workpiece guides are movable between their respective active and inactive positions independently of each other.

Thus, Applicant submits claim 26 is allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §§102(b), 103(a)

At page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 6, 8, 14-19, 21, 22, 24 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Klemens (Klemens Degen) (DE 10055925A1). At page 3 of the Office Action, claim 11 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Degen. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

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Initially, Applicant notes that Degen is assigned to the same assignee as the present invention. Degen is in the German language. U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2004/0051011, published on March 18, 2004, is a corresponding application to Degen. Also, DE 1055925 A1 is the German priority application to Degen and is discussed in the Applicant's specification.

Claims 1 and 14 have been amended to clarify the claims. Amended claim 1 calls for "the lateral guide elements in the active position being exposed toward a top supporting surface of the roller." Referring to the example of Applicant's invention shown in Fig. 2, the lateral guide elements O in the active position are exposed toward a top supporting surface of the roller 9. Conversely, Degen has a support head 8 which has a pivoting mount 14 articulated pivotably on a roller support 12. The pivoting mount 14 has a U-shaped design with balls 11 arranged to form a support element, on which a workpiece may be placed so that it may be displaced in all directions of the plane. Although the Degen pivoting mount 14 with balls 11 can be pivoted relative to the roller 9, the Degen pivoting mount 14 does not have Applicant's lateral guide elements in the active position being exposed toward a top supporting surface of the roller. Rather, the Degen pivoting mount 14 has the balls 11 instead of being exposed to the top supporting surface of the roller.

Applicant's claimed invention provides advantages. For example, the lateral guide elements exposed to the top surface of the roller can maintain a workpiece on the roller by preventing the workpiece from sliding off of the roller in an axial direction. The Degen pivoting mount and balls does not provide such an advantage.

As to claim 14, claim 14 similarly calls for "the workpiece guide in the active position having a guide portion extending above the workpiece-supporting roller and exposed toward a top supporting surface of the workpiece-supporting roller, the guide portion not extending above the workpiece-supporting roller when the workpiece guide is in the inactive position." Accordingly, claim 14 is distinguished from Degen for similar reasons.

Dependent claim 22 has been amended to be consistent with amended claim 14.

The dependent claims are allowable at least for the same reasons that their respective independent claims are allowable.

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Thus, Applicant submits that the §102 and §103 rejections should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the patent application is in condition for allowance and requests a Notice of Allowance be issued.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: March 14, 2005

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